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CLAIMS

1. Equine herpesvirus (EHV) mutant, comprising one or more deletions, substitutions or insertions in the endogenous promoter region of an essential viral gene with respect to the parent strain.
2. EHV mutant as claimed in claim 1, wherein deletions are introduced into the promoter.
3. EHV mutant as claimed in claims 1-2, wherein the gene is the Immediate Early gene.
4. EHV mutant as claimed in claims 1-3, wherein the mutant virus is the EHV-1 virus or the EHV-4 virus.
5. EHV mutant as claimed in claims 1-4, further comprising one or more mutations in one or more other genes and/or their promoters.
6. EHV-1 mutant as claimed in claims 1-5, comprising a deletion of the SacI-SacI fragment or the HindIII-Clal fragment or the NdeI-NdeI fragment or the SphI-SphI fragment of the promoter region of the Immediate Early gene.
7. Nucleic acid sequence, comprising the endogenous promoter region of an the Immediate Early gene from EHV and optionally one or more flanking sequences, which promoter region comprises a deletion of the SacI-SacI fragment or the HindIII-Clal fragment or the NdeI-NdeI fragment or the SphI-SphI fragment of the promoter region of the Immediate Early gene.
8. Nucleic acid sequence as claimed in claim 7, wherein the EHV is EHV-1 or EHV-4.
9. Recombinant DNA molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence as claimed in claims 7 or 8.
10. Host cell harbouring a recombinant DNA molecule as claimed in claim 9.
11. Vaccine comprising an EHV mutant as claimed in claims 1-6 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
12. A process for the preparation of an EHV mutant as claimed in claims 1-6, comprising transfection of a cell culture with a recombinant DNA molecule as claimed in claim 11 and EHV genomic DNA.
13. Method of genetically attenuating EHV, comprising mutation of the endogenous promoter region of an essential gene, which mutation consists of one or more deletions, substitutions or insertions in the promoter region of an essential gene.
14. Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the EHV is EHV-1 or EHV-4.
15. Method as claimed in claims 13-14, wherein the gene is an immediate Early gene.